Recruiting and managing volunteers

Formally adopted by the Governing Board of:-	**Caister Primary Federation**
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Chair of Governors:-	**Payal Patel**
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1. Introduction

1.1 Volunteers are a welcome resource for helping to raise children's achievements, complementing the work of teachers and support staff. This document provides guidance on the deployment of volunteers to help ensure that those people who pose a risk of harm are prevented from working with children. Different guidance may apply for occasional or one-off volunteers, where this is the case it will be made clear.

1.2 The DfE document 'Keeping children safe in education' places a responsibility on Governing Boards/Trusts to ensure all employees who work with children undergo statutory checks to prevent people who pose a risk of harm from working with children. Governing Boards/Trusts must ensure volunteers are appropriately supervised and can also decide to ask for checks beyond what is required.

1.3 The Head of School should also ensure that no volunteer replaces paid employees or takes on work normally given to a paid employee.

2. Recruitment of Volunteer

2.1 For some types of voluntary work, the recruitment process can be very informal. However, because the volunteer role in a school, in most cases, have some degree of responsibility (e.g. working with pupils), selection processes need to be robust to ensure only the right volunteers are recruited. The Head of School will need to satisfy themselves that the volunteer is of good character. It is recommended that the recruitment process should include the following: -

- Application form - any gaps or anomalies should be explored at interview. CV's should not be accepted alone but can be accepted alongside a completed application form.
- Two satisfactory references - requests for references should include asking for details on the prospective volunteer's behaviour and interaction with children and young people.
- Interview - the Head of School (or other employee with delegated authority) or intended supervisor should meet with the volunteer for a discussion of the proposed role, its requirements and expectations.
- DBS checks - an enhanced DBS check with barred list check is required for all volunteers who will have regular and unsupervised access to children as they will be considered to be undertaking a regulated activity. Where the volunteer is supervised to a reasonable level, an Enhanced DBS check can be undertaken but it is not required by law as they will not be considered to be in a regulated activity. However, schools will need to be able to evidence their decision making in terms of the level of supervision a volunteer has, where it is deemed not necessary to undertake the check. Existing volunteers will not have to be

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re-checked if they have already had a DBS check (which will include children's barred list information if engaging in regulated activity). However, if there are concerns, a new DBS check will be considered. For further information regarding volunteers and DBS checks see *Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) checks model policy and procedure P112*, on InfoSpace.

- Verification of the volunteer's identity and where relevant, verification of qualifications and professional status.
- Childcare (disqualification) regulations 2009 declaration – The same criteria apply to volunteers as employees in terms of who should be checked. Any information provided by volunteers or prospective volunteers should be assessed in line with the guidance issued in relation to employees. See *Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations requirements guidance G112b* on InfoSpace for further information.
- Equality of opportunity – Governing Boards/Trusts have responsibility for applying their policy on equal opportunities to avoid unlawful discrimination.

2.2 The Head of School will be responsible for ensuring these checks have been completed where they are appropriate. Evidence of all volunteer recruitment should be recorded on the single central record.

2.3 Where a one-off or occasional volunteering opportunity arises, for example where a parent who is well known to the school is approached to take on a particular role, a streamlined procedure can be adopted - seeking references, checking to ensure others in the school community know of no concerns and can make a positive recommendation, and conducting an informal interview to gauge the person's aptitude and suitability.

3. Management of volunteers

3.1 The monitoring of volunteers continues beyond recruitment. Volunteers should have a planned induction. Safeguarding protocols and monitoring of performance are both important and will be ongoing whilst the volunteer is volunteering in the school.

3.2 All volunteers should have a named supervisor who shall be responsible for:

- ensuring the volunteer understands their volunteering role by outlining specific and general tasks, responsibilities and who they will report to,
- organising a planned induction to the school, including explaining relevant policies and procedures (including safeguarding, safer working practice/the Code of Conduct, Health and safety, data protection, sickness absence reporting) and the duties and tasks agreed,
- ensuring that volunteers are aware of their agreed responsibilities with regards to confidentiality and relations with the media,
- ensuring that volunteers have adequate work space, equipment and services necessary to perform their tasks effectively and safely including personal identification where appropriate,
- arranging a short trial period during which volunteers will receive close support and mutual feedback, including the chance for them to feedback their views
  providing regular support,
- making sure that the volunteer, their role and activities are reviewed and monitored,
- organising appropriate training to make sure that volunteers can carry out their activities effectively. This training must directly relate to the activity for which they volunteer.

3.3 One off or occasional volunteers should be made aware who to report to and who they will be supervised by. They should also fully understand what is expected of them, be briefed on safeguarding protocols, health and safety and safer working practices and how to safely access any equipment or services required.

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4. Conduct, monitoring performance and complaints

4.1 Volunteers will not be subject to disciplinary procedures nor have access to the grievance procedures as these are for employees only. However, volunteers will be given an opportunity to discuss any concerns that they may have about their volunteering and consult with the school generally.

4.2 Volunteers should raise any complaints or concerns with their supervisor. If this is not appropriate or they are not happy with how this is dealt with, volunteers should take their complaint to the Head of School or follow the complaints procedure.

4.3 If there are concerns about the conduct or performance of a volunteer, their supervisor should investigate. This should include talking with the volunteer concerned.

4.4 If conduct or performance is unsatisfactory, the volunteer should be informed that they will be offered additional support for an identified period of time. The object of the support will be to encourage improvement.

4.5 If a volunteer does not meet the standards of performance, and the steps taken to encourage them to improve does not work, the volunteer should be offered more suitable alternative voluntary activities or asked to leave with one week's notice.

4.6 If behaviour, which in the Head of School 's view, is equivalent to gross misconduct has occurred, the volunteer activity will be terminated immediately.

4.7 In the event of conduct concerns and doubt as to the procedures to follow, advice should be sought from the HR provider.

5. Ending involvement

5.1 Either the Head of School or the volunteer can end the volunteering at any time and without any notice. However, unless there is an emergency or misconduct, the volunteers should be given 2 weeks' notice, if possible.

5.2 In all cases the Head of School should provide the volunteer with details of the reasons why their involvement is no longer needed.

5.3 If asked, the Head of School should provide volunteers with a certificate giving details of all the activities that they have successfully undertaken.

6. Health and safety

6.1 The Governing Board has a duty to look after the safety and wellbeing of volunteers. The *Recruiting volunteers compliance code P656* on InfoSpace provides information on what health and safety considerations need to be addressed.

7. Repaying volunteers their expenses

7.1 Whilst unpaid, volunteering should not leave volunteers out of pocket. Therefore, it is good practice to reimburse a volunteer for the expenses they incur while working for the school. However, caution should be exercised when it comes to refunds. Paying 'expenses' automatically, without justification, can be seen in tribunals and by HM Revenue and Customs as the equivalent of paying a salary and could therefore potentially give volunteers employment rights, have tax implications for the school and affect a volunteer's benefit claim

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(if applicable). The safest course is to reimburse only actual expenses, preferably against receipts.

7.2 Individual arrangements and procedures for claiming should be explained to volunteers before they start their volunteering activity. When claiming, volunteers should attach corresponding receipts, travel tickets or other evidence of the actual expenditure incurred.

8. Insurance

8.1 The Head of School must ensure that their insurance covers all volunteer activities carried out for the school. This is likely to be covered under the public liability insurance as long as:

- volunteers were acting within their authority at the time of the incident giving rise to the claim,
- the school would have been covered for the claim had the claim been made against them,
- Where Norfolk County Council organises the insurance, it has full conduct and control of any claim.

9. Data protection act and Freedom of Information act

9.1 Any personal information held regarding volunteers should be stored and used only in compliance with data protection law. Volunteers should be made aware that information produced by them in the course of their volunteering may be made available to the public under the Freedom of information act 2000.

Appendix 1 – Table of changes

Date of change	Paragraphs affected	Summary of update
22/05/2025	All	Review of whole document and terminology to ensure consistency across all policies and procedures.
17/06/2022	2.1	Updated to state that CV's can only be accepted alongside completed application forms and that existing volunteers will not need further checks unless there are concerns.
30/08/2018	5	Removal of reference to *Recruiting Volunteers –Health and Safety Checklist (C656)* as this no longer exists.
01/03/2017	All	New formatting due to launch of new HR website, HR InfoSpace – no change to content.

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